

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 4 and 9 are amended as follows:

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4. (Once Amended) A probing method according to claim 1, wherein said measurement of the load applied to the object of inspection by contact with the probes includes steps of locating a polishing mechanism right under the probes, the polishing mechanism including a polish plate to be used to polish the tip of the probes; moving the located polishing mechanism toward the probe card, thereby bringing the polish plate into contact with the probes; overdriving the polishing mechanism toward the probe card; and measuring a load applied to the polish plate by the probes by means of a pressure sensor located under the polishing mechanism during the overdrive operation.

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9. (Once Amended) A probing method in which a main chuck is moved in X-, Y-, and θ -directions to align an object of inspection on the main chuck with probes of a probe card located over the main chuck, the main chuck is moved in a Z-direction so that electrodes of the object of inspection are brought into contact with the probes, the main chuck is overdriven toward the probe card, and electrical properties of the object of inspection are inspected by means of the probes, the probing method comprising steps of:

locating a polishing mechanism right under the probes, the polishing mechanism including a polish plate to be used to polish the tip of the probes;

moving the located polishing mechanism toward the probe card, thereby bringing the polish plate into contact with the probes;

overdriving the polishing mechanism toward the probe card;

measuring a load applied to the polish plate by the probes by means of a pressure sensor located under the polishing mechanism during the overdrive operation; and

controlling the movement of the main chuck in accordance with the measured load.